



News from

# Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 6, 2007

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## **Cong. Kind: President's Budget Does Not Reflect the Priorities of Western Wisconsin**

*As State Faces Extreme Cold, President's Budget Cuts Low-Income  
Heating Assistance for Wisconsin by Nearly \$18 Million*

Washington, D.C. – As Wisconsin faces extremely cold temperatures, President Bush Monday released a FY 2008 budget that proposes drastic cuts to Wisconsin's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The President's budget also cuts other critical domestic programs, and under honest accounting practices does not balance the budget in five years. U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) criticized the budget for not addressing the concerns of western Wisconsin families – education, health care, and fiscal responsibility.

According to the Northeast Midwest Institute, the President's FY 2008 budget would cut Wisconsin's LIHEAP funding by \$17.9 million. This important program last year helped more than 152,000 Wisconsin households pay their energy bills.

"The President's budget protects nearly \$3 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, while it cuts funding to help low-income Wisconsin families keep the heat on during this extremely cold winter. It shortchanges our kids' education and funding for veterans' health care. This budget simply does not reflect the priorities of western Wisconsin families."

While the President's claims that his budget is in balance by 2012, he leaves out enormous costs from his budget, including the five-year costs of fixing the Alternative Minimum Tax and the full costs for the Iraqi war. Under realistic accounting, the budget will create deficits totaling \$3.2 trillion over the next 10 years.

"We need to get our fiscal house back in order, but we will not balance this budget on the backs of our veterans, or our families. We'll engage in honest, realistic budgeting, and make the tough decisions to bring fiscal discipline back to the federal budget, while protecting what matters most to the people of Wisconsin," Kind added.

The President's budget is referred to the House Budget Committee, which will spend the next month-and-a-half debating the document.

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## **Snapshot: Bush Budget for Wisconsin**

**Health Care:** The administration's budget includes \$78 billion in Medicare and Medicaid cuts and billions in new premiums that threaten to endanger Wisconsin's 818,000 Medicare patients' access to the care, and put an even bigger strain on the state's budget to maintain coverage and eligibility. Furthermore, the President's budget underfunds the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by \$10 billion giving Wisconsin less money to cover its neediest children through BadgerCare. From FY 03 to FY 06, Wisconsin's SCHIP block grant funding has already been reduced from \$99.6 million to \$69.7 million.

**Veterans:** The President's budget underfunds the Department of Veterans affairs, requesting only a 6-percent increase over the 2007 funding level, rather than a 13-14 percent the cost the Veterans Health Administration has requested to meet the rising costs from medical inflation and increasing demand. Wisconsin has more than 445,000 veterans and troops, nearly 60,000 in the Third Congressional District alone.

**Education:** No Child Left Behind, which is up for renewal, would remain about \$15 billion below the level promised when the bill was signed into law. The President's budget also again freezes funds for key college programs like work study and zeroes out Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG). In 2006, Wisconsin received \$18 million in federal college work study funds and \$16.3 million in SEOG grants.

**Local Communities:** The President's budget again attempts to eliminate two of Wisconsin's local crime fighting tools – the Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS) program and Justice Assistance Grants (JAG). The COPS program assists Wisconsin's law enforcement agencies hire police officers, enhance crime fighting technology, and support crime prevention initiatives. JAG supports state and local drug task forces, community crime prevention programs, and prosecution initiatives. Last year, Wisconsin received \$4.4 million in COPS funding and \$4.6 million in JAG funding that it used to keep neighborhoods safe.